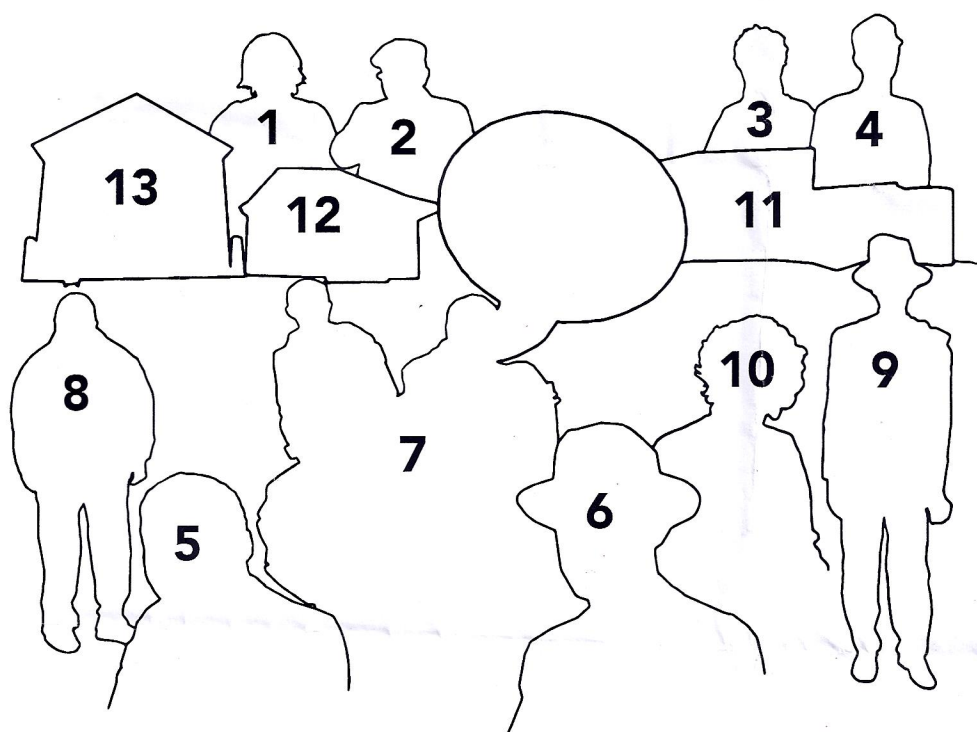


THE TREMÉ HOMECOMING MURAL

The Birth of Tremé Center



UNSUNG HEROES

1. Cheryl Austin

Executive Director for The Greater Tremé Consortium, Inc.

2. Ron Chisom, 4. Jim Hayes

Co-founders of The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, a national and international collective of anti-racist, multicultural community organizers and educators dedicated to building an effective movement for social transformation.

3. Viola Washington

Executive director of Welfare Rights Organization, a grassroots community-based organization operated by welfare recipients to protect the rights of poor people.

5. Jessie Hill

Jessie Hill was a legendary New Orleans musician whose 1960 single "Oh Poo Pah Doo" became an instant Mardi Gras classic and national chart-topper. The Hill family has lived in the Tremé neighborhood for generations and has had a considerable impact on the New Orleans music landscape: Glen David, James, and Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews are just a few of the successful musicians in the Hill family.

6. Louis Charbonnet

Charbonnet Funeral Home, down the street from the Tremé Center, is an integral part of the community, guiding families through grief and celebrating their lives with jazz funerals, second lines, and unconventional wakes. The wake of Tremé Brass Band drummer "Uncle" Lionel Batiste positioned him as he often was in life: standing, leaning on his cane in a beautifully tai-

lored suit, watches, rings, and sunglasses. The funeral home has been part of the Tremé neighborhood since 1883 and has grown from a small family business to one of the most prominent African-American owned businesses in the South.

7. The Box Band

The three young boys playing music in the center of the mural were in the "box band," a group of youth who would gather at Tremé Center to learn music from the older musicians and even make their own instruments with recycled materials. The Tremé Center continues to be a place where cultural traditions are passed on to youth.

8. Big Ike

Big Ike was a community elder, mentor, and educator for thousands of youth who attended the summer camp at Tremé Center for over twenty years, teaching them respect for themselves and others.

9. Ashton Ramsey

Mr. Ramsey has worked with the youth at Tremé Center in the summertime for over twenty years. He is a neighborhood elder, historian and well-established folk artist who makes suits into collaged works of wearable art that have empowering messages and have been featured in the Ogden Museum of Southern Art. Each year, Mr. Ramsey teaches a history and reading class at the Tambourine and Fan summer camp so that youth can understand the rich culture of Tremé and New Orleans. In the mural he is wearing a suit that spreads the message of love.

The jazz tradition still lives in Tremé. Children still pound on cardboard boxes for drums. They blow their horns on the corner of St. Philip and Villere and parade through the streets, just as older musicians did when they were young. This mural represents the historical past and living present of the Tremé neighborhood and community center. While the whole story of this neighborhood could never be told in one mural, we attempt to bring attention to the unsung heroes who had special connections to the Tremé Center.

Founded in 1812, Tremé is America's oldest free black neighborhood, as well as the epicenter of New Orleans's multi-cultural melting pot and the entire genre of jazz music. This small collection of city blocks has affected culture on a global scale.

More than forty years ago, much of this treasured neighborhood was destroyed when Federal Urban Renewal funded-construction leveled eight blocks of historic Creole cottages and music halls, and tore out the streets where music flowed. The developers of the Armstrong Park Corporation proposed to build a culture and entertainment center similar to New York's Lincoln Center or Nashville's Grand Ole Opry. The ninety-six million dollar proposal included an assortment of restaurants, jazz entertainment, and three hotels.

However, this plan was ultimately abandoned and left behind four bulldozed square blocks, and hundreds of Tremé community members without homes or the jobs promised to them through the development's construction and attractions. After a decade of disputes over the land, the city administration chose a group of investors to develop and manage Louis Armstrong Park, which was built on the neighborhood rubble and included Congo Square.

In 1973, community members engaged in protests and social activism against this injustice. They were able to relocate homeless families and secure federal funding to build the Tremé Center. Key players in this momentous act of social justice are at the top of the mural from left to right. They are: Cheryl Austin, Ron Chisom, Viola Washington, and Jim Hayes. Today the Tremé Center is a place where the community comes to enrich their lives through everything from art classes to exercise. Families hold events, youth attend summer camp, traditions are passed on, and a community thrives.

10. Miss Lucile

Miss Lucile has lived in the same house on St. Phillip Street next to what is now the Tremé Coffeehouse for ninety-five years. She is a highly respected elder in the Tremé neighborhood as a gatekeeper and has seen the area go through changes for over nine decades.

11. The Tremé Center, 12. Tremé Coffeehouse, 13. Miss Annie Mae's Sweet Shop

The buildings on the corner of North Villere St. and Saint Phillip St. have a special significance in the history of the Tremé Center, located right across the street. The Tremé Coffeehouse, a hub for coffee-drinkers, neighborhood residents, and tourist explorers, was once a jazz club. In the 1950s and 60s it was called Roland's and in the 70s it was renamed the Petroleum Club. Now a residence, years ago Miss Annie Mae's Sweet Shop was a popular destination for youth from the Tremé Center to buy snacks and treats.

Artist: Jamar Duval Pierre

Pierre was born and raised in New Orleans, LA. The Tremé Center has been an enormous part of the artist's spiritual and creative growth process. He has been honored to work in this community for twenty years with the Tambourine and Fan club. The creation of this mural was a Homecoming for him and he hopes it will be one for the people that are part of the Tremé, New Orleans, and Afro-American culture. In keeping with a tradition of involving children in the process of painting moral and educational murals, Pierre collaborated with Tremé community youth on all of the artwork he created for the Tremé Center.